

## TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: REINVIGORATING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

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**TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: REINVIGORATING  
THE WARRIOR SPIRIT**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Leadership engagement is a key factor in changing an organization's culture. Leaders can start the culture development process by imposing their thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions on an organization. As a strategic leader, General Eric Shinseki, former Chief of Staff of the Army, saw a need to develop and describe a common warrior ethos throughout the Army. In 2003, he stated that the Army has always embraced this ethos but the demands of transformation will require a renewed effort to ensure that all soldiers understand and embody this warrior ethos. The 35th Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter J. Schoomaker, embraced General Shinseki's vision and made it one of his top priorities. This strategic research project will examine how the United States Army reinvigorated the warrior ethos mindset into its institution by using embedding and reinforcing mechanisms. A model by Edgar H. Schein, the author of *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, will be the principal tool used to examine how the Army changed its culture by placing emphasis on and redefining the expectations of a soldier as it relates to the warrior ethos. This application demonstrates the potential value of academic models in facilitating change in organizations.





## TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: REINVIGORATING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

One of the primary responsibilities of a strategic leader is to influence the organizational culture.

—Edgar H. Schein

### Organizational Culture and Leadership

How do you change or influence organizational culture? The answer to this question involves leadership engagement. Leadership engagement is a key factor in generating cultural change because leadership and culture are inseparable.<sup>1</sup> “When we examine culture and leadership closely, we see that they are two sides of the same coin; neither can really be understood by itself.”<sup>2</sup> The culture development process begins when leaders impose their thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions on an organization.<sup>3</sup> This process occurred in 2003 when the top leader in the United States Army saw a need to change the Army culture by revitalizing the warrior ethos across his organization.<sup>4</sup> There was a need for soldiers to change their mindset and behavior while the Army was transforming during a time of war. Therefore, General Eric Shinseki, former Chief of Staff of the United States Army, released a memorandum to other senior leaders in the Army outlining his strategic plan to place more emphasis on all soldiers understanding, living, and emulating the warrior ethos spirit.<sup>5</sup> This strategic research project will examine how the United States Army reinvigorated the warrior ethos mindset into its institution. A model by Edgar H. Schein, the author of *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, will be the principal tool used to examine how the Army attempted to change its culture by placing emphasis on and redefining the expectations of a soldier as it relates to the warrior ethos. Furthermore, this document

will conclude with a few recommendations that any leader can use to generate change within an organization.

Edgar H. Schein, a former Captain in the U.S. Army, is a renowned writer, researcher, teacher, and consultant on organizational culture and development.<sup>6</sup> His model focuses on embedding and reinforcing mechanisms to help change the culture in an organization.<sup>7</sup> Schein's model of culture has been widely used in various fields of study to explain change in the computer industry<sup>8</sup>; education field<sup>9</sup>; health care system<sup>10</sup>; and safety environment.<sup>11</sup> For example, attempts have been made to restructure organizations to use information technology efficiently, improve teacher development and reform schools as well as the health care system to use resources effectively, and enhance safety culture to reduce preventable accidents. Before we look at Schein's model, we will take a closer look at a definition of culture and the term warrior ethos. Let us begin with culture since it is a concept that has been misunderstood and debated for over twenty years.<sup>12</sup>

### Aspects and Levels of Culture

The online Merriam-Webster dictionary defines culture as "the set of values, conventions or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic."<sup>13</sup> Edgar H. Schein defines culture "as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."<sup>14</sup> In addition, Field Manual 1 states that "the Army's culture promotes certain norms of conduct".<sup>15</sup> These norms of conduct are rooted in

traditions and history that cherishes the past as well as cultivates the memory of its institution through traditions and ceremonies.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, for the purposes of this research project, Schein's definition is the preferred use of the term since the military has its own unique culture. It is also important to highlight that organizations or groups have a culture that is developed in the workplace, social settings, schools and churches.<sup>17</sup> "But most cultural lessons are learnt by observing and imitating role models as they go about their daily affairs, or as they are portrayed in the media."<sup>18</sup>

Schein believes organizational cultures are shaped and defined by artifacts, beliefs and values as well as underlying assumptions. He refers to these three characteristics as levels of culture. Artifacts are visible attributes and descriptions that identify a group or organization.<sup>19</sup> "Artifacts include the visible products of the group, such as the architecture of its physical environment; its language; its technology and products; its artistic creations; its style, as embodied in clothing, manners of address, emotional displays, and myths and stories told about the organization; its published lists of values; its observable rituals and ceremonies; and so on."<sup>20</sup> "Beliefs and values at this conscious level will predict much of the behavior that can be observed at the artifacts level."<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the things that we believe and value are visible at the artifacts level. For example, a business manager may believe that an increase in advertisement will result in an increase in sales during a period of declining revenue.<sup>22</sup> This belief will produce a strategy that can be seen at the artifacts level. Underlying assumptions are the process of how a person deciphers or interprets artifacts.<sup>23</sup> These underlying assumptions are made unconsciously and based on perceptions and

beliefs.<sup>24</sup> As an example, a group of engineers in a company may assume that only another engineer, not a manager, will truly understand what engineers do.<sup>25</sup>

As for military culture, it has its own set of artifacts, beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions. “The way soldiers talk to each other in meetings, the structure of PowerPoint charts, and the condition of the conference room are artifacts of what an organization values.”<sup>26</sup> “Military culture is an amalgam of values, customs, traditions, and their philosophical underpinnings that, over time, has created a shared institutional ethos.”<sup>27</sup> As an example, the United States Army expects soldiers to live by certain artifacts, which reflect the values of duty, honor, selfless service, personal courage, loyalty, integrity, and respect. These values are modeled through the behavior (artifacts) of every soldier. Warrior Ethos is an integral part of the Army culture. Warrior Ethos as well as Army values and beliefs all work together to characterize the Army’s culture.

Although the Army has its own distinct culture, it is important to note that there are subcultures within the Army.<sup>28</sup> For example, in the book *The Future of the Army Profession*, Don Snider talks about the Army officer corps having its own culture defined by four distinct identities.<sup>29</sup> The four identities are warrior, leader of character, servant, and member of a profession.<sup>30</sup> All officers “should hold in some proportion all of these four identities, from the moment of commissioning forward.”<sup>31</sup> These four identities help shape the officer’s culture. The identity of being a warrior is consistent with warrior ethos and the behavior that all officers should live by daily.<sup>32</sup> “Although the underlying assumptions of Army culture serve as the foundation of these subcultures, as we attempt to assess Army culture or the culture of any complex organization, we face the

requirement to untangle how the subcultures relate to each other and discover how they fit together to form the larger Army culture.”<sup>33</sup> Warrior ethos and Army values provide a common bond for all subcultures within the organization. It is now appropriate that we define the term warrior ethos in detail.

### Renewing the Warrior Ethos Spirit

Carl Von Clausewitz defines war as “an act of force to compel the enemy to do our will.”<sup>34</sup> It takes warriors to force the enemy to achieve this will. Clausewitz believes a warrior must have courage as an essential quality.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, a warrior can be defined as “a person who shows or has shown great courage, vigor, or aggressiveness.”<sup>36</sup> Ethos is defined as “the fundamental character or spirit of a culture; the underlying sentiment that informs the beliefs, customs, or practices of a group or society.”<sup>37</sup> In Schein’s terms, this ethos would represent beliefs and values. Applying these to the Army, warrior ethos is thus a cultural mindset that soldiers or troops live by in order to accomplish their missions. Notwithstanding, Field Manual 3-12.75 defines Warrior Ethos as “four simple lines embedded in the Soldiers Creed that compels Soldiers to fight through all adversity, under any circumstances, in order to achieve victory.”<sup>38</sup> The four simple lines are: (1) I will always place the mission first; (2) I will never accept defeat; (3) I will never quit; and (4) I will never leave a fallen comrade. These four lines represent the warrior ethos and the words that all Soldiers are expected to live by every day. The 2005 Army Strategic Planning Guidance describes the term warrior ethos as the following:

The Warrior Ethos is equally vital to our culture. It is the foundation of the American Soldier’s total commitment to victory in peace and war. Soldiers who live the Warrior Ethos always put the mission first, refuse to accept defeat, never quit and never leave a fallen comrade behind. They are

trained and equipped to engage and destroy the enemies of the United States in close combat.<sup>39</sup>

The term warrior ethos is not new for the United States Army. It has been around for over 230 years. For example, in 1776 General George Washington and his troops demonstrated the warrior ethos spirit at the battle of Trenton in New Jersey.<sup>40</sup> In spite of prior defeats, extreme fatigue, and unfavorable weather conditions, they overwhelmingly won the battle against the Hessian soldiers.<sup>41</sup> General Washington and his troops showed remarkable courage, bravery and endurance, emulating the warrior ethos principles in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Culturally speaking, our beliefs and values concerning warrior ethos has not changed. However, the four lines that define the warrior ethos are new and help shape the mindset and behavior of Soldiers and at the same time develop a better understanding of the term. Moreover, in 2003 many senior leaders in the United States Army concluded that the warrior ethos was lacking in some soldiers.<sup>42</sup> “Army leaders concluded that the increasingly high-tech force was becoming too specialized, with too many troops thinking of themselves in terms of their military specialties not their mastery of marksmanship and other basic combat skills.”<sup>43</sup> All soldiers must be able to master certain combat related skills regardless of their military occupational specialty.<sup>44</sup> Senior Army leaders were convinced that too much focus on the technical skills of being a soldier, particularly in the non-combat arms branches, resulted in a neglect of basic combat warrior skills.<sup>45</sup>

As a result, leaders placed emphasis on redefining the term warrior ethos due to the changing environment and the Army’s transformation. Four years of study also identified a need to implement a commonly understood warrior ethos across the United States Army.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, Christopher Coker, in his 2007 book *The Warrior Ethos*

*Military Culture and the War on Terror*, shows how warrior ethos was increasingly missing from the military in recent years.<sup>47</sup> Even a survey of officers at the Command and General Staff College revealed that warrior ethos in the Army was disappearing.<sup>48</sup> “Warrior ethos has been [re]introduced because army leaders have come to recognize that the battlefields of the war on terror are likely to be asymmetrical, violent, unpredictable and multidimensional – in short, unforgiving environments in which every soldier may need to be a warrior at some point or another in his or her career.”<sup>49</sup> Reemphasizing the importance of the warrior ethos in the Army was a critical move to revitalize a significant part of the Army’s culture. Again, the four lines defining warrior ethos are new, but our core beliefs and values concerning warrior ethos has not changed.

In 2006, former Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General Peter J. Schoomaker stated these words:

The Warrior Ethos is the common thread that has tied us all together throughout 230 years of service to our nation. Since 1775, American Soldiers have answered the call to duty. From Valley Forge to the battlefield of Gettysburg; from the Argonne Forest to the shores of Normandy; from the rice paddies of Korea and Vietnam to the mountains of Afghanistan and the streets of Baghdad; our military history is rich with the willingness of generation after generation to live by the Warrior Ethos.<sup>50</sup>

Although the warrior ethos has been around for years, the Army outlined a plan to reemphasize the term shortly after the 9/11 attack by Al Qaeda on the World Trade Center. The Army was transforming and reorganizing while at war. Soldiers needed to be a part of that transformation. Senior military leaders understood that “soldiers have always been the Army’s most valuable asset.”<sup>51</sup> Military leaders also understood that the soldier is the centerpiece and strength of the United States Army.

The lack of warrior ethos was also noticed in the officer corps. An article in the 2001 September-October Military Review titled *Training and Developing Leaders in a Transforming Army* by Lieutenant General William Steel and Lieutenant Colonel Robert Waters implied that some junior officers' warrior ethos spirit was weak because of a lack of quality time spent as a platoon leader.<sup>52</sup> All too often lieutenants were used to fill staff positions due to a shortage of captains. As a platoon leader, these young officers would have been exposed to more training opportunities that would allow them to put into practice their warrior skills.<sup>53</sup> This example is another reason why the Army initiated a process to improve the warrior ethos mindset across the force.

General Eric Shinseki initiated the process in 2003 by releasing a memorandum to the force emphasizing the importance of warrior ethos.<sup>54</sup> General Shinseki stated, "The Army has always embraced this ethos but the demands of transformation will require a renewed effort to ensure that all Soldiers truly understand and embody this warrior ethos."<sup>55</sup> The 35th Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General Peter J. Schoomaker, took on Shinseki's vision and made it one of his top priorities. General Schoomaker's goal was to instill Soldiers with the warrior ethos mindset as the Army transformed.

General Schoomaker approved the warrior ethos' implementation plan in the fall of 2003.<sup>56</sup> Shortly after taking over as the Army Chief of Staff on 1 August 2003, General Schoomaker conveyed his thoughts concerning warrior ethos during a round table discussion with reporters in Washington, D.C. He told the reporters that all Soldiers must see themselves as a rifleman first.<sup>57</sup> General Schoomaker placed a lot of emphasis on the warfighting skills and mentality of the basic rifleman. "Emphasis on



these individual combat skills was part of a higher plan to infuse the entire Army with a Warrior Ethos mentality."<sup>58</sup> General Schoomaker set about a deliberate plan to change the Army culture by placing emphasis on the warrior ethos spirit in the organization. In this plan, we can begin to analyze how Schein's model of organizational culture reflects how the renewed warrior ethos principles were infused into Army culture.

### Schein's Model of Organizational Culture

In understanding the dynamics of organizations and change as it relates to culture, Schein outlines how leaders embed their beliefs, values, and assumptions using six primary embedding mechanisms. Embedding mechanisms are essentially those things, actions, or approaches that a leader uses to inculcate change into an organization.<sup>59</sup> The six embedding mechanisms are *what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis; how leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises; how leaders allocate resources; deliberate role modeling, teaching and coaching; how leaders allocate rewards and status; and how leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate.*<sup>60</sup>

The *what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control* embedding mechanism is defined by the consistency of what a leader spends time talking about, what he or she believes, measures and/or controls.<sup>61</sup> The embedding mechanism of *how leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises* focuses on how a leader responds to crisis or unfavorable events. *How leaders allocate resources* influences culture by shaping the beliefs an individual has on the limitations and constraints on assets.<sup>62</sup> "Such beliefs not only function as criteria by which decisions are made but are constraints on decision making in that they limit the perception of alternatives."<sup>63</sup> *Deliberate role modeling,*

*teaching, and coaching* embedding mechanism is essentially the leader's actions demonstrated as a role model and his or her mentorship used to help shape the organizational culture.<sup>64</sup> The embedding mechanism of *how leaders allocate rewards and status* centers around learning from promotions, and performance appraisals as well as discussions on punishments and rewards.<sup>65</sup> Lastly, *how leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate* focuses on hiring and introducing new members to the organization's culture, and releasing those members who no longer exemplify the organization's culture.<sup>66</sup> "These embedding mechanisms all interact and tend to reinforce each other if the leader's own beliefs, values, and assumptions are consistent."<sup>67</sup>

Reinforcing mechanisms are those elements that support the embedding mechanisms. Reinforcing mechanisms look at things such as organizational structure, systems, procedures, rituals, stories, myths, etc.<sup>68</sup> Schein identifies six reinforcing mechanisms. The six reinforcing mechanisms are *organizational design and structure; organizational systems and procedures; rites and rituals of the organization; design of physical space, facades, and buildings; stories about important events and people; and formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters.*<sup>69</sup>

A leader uses *design and structure of an organization* to maximize the effectiveness of subgroups within the organization as well as reinforcing leader assumptions.<sup>70</sup> Leaders also reinforce their beliefs and assumptions by implementing *organizational systems and procedures* that are routine in nature such as meetings, committees, reports, and processes.<sup>71</sup> The *rites and rituals of an organization* work as a powerful reinforcement tool to establish certain behaviors that are extremely important

to help shape culture.<sup>72</sup> *Design of physical space, facades, and buildings* is intended to emphasize the visual aspects of an organization by all personnel to include outsiders.<sup>73</sup> These visual features are connected closely with deeply held assumptions.<sup>74</sup> *Stories about important events and people* educate newcomers on the culture and leader behavior and reinforce assumptions about an organization.<sup>75</sup> *Formal statements of an organization* attempt to reinforce the values or assumptions of a leader.<sup>76</sup> General Schoomaker used several of these embedding and reinforcing mechanisms to help infuse the Warrior Ethos mindset in the United States Army. The relative value of embedding and reinforcing mechanisms help shape culture in an organization and ensure a better chance of long term success and sustainment. We will now show how General Schoomaker and other Army leaders used these mechanisms to generate change across the United States Army.

#### Applying Schein's Model to Renew the Warrior Ethos Principles

Using the embedding mechanism of *what leaders pay attention to*, General Schoomaker spent a lot of time travelling around the world talking about changing the mindset of Soldiers to one that reflects a Warrior Ethos. He spoke about Warrior Ethos in his speeches and placed emphasis on Army troops being Soldiers first and technicians second. During the 2003 Association of the United States Army Luncheon as the keynote speaker, General Schoomaker made it perfectly clear that the Soldier was one of the 15 areas of immediate focus that required more of a strategic undertaking.<sup>77</sup> His remarks implied a need to change the warrior culture in the Army. Every opportunity that he had, he spoke about the Warrior Ethos being a part of what it takes to be a war fighting Soldier. General Schoomaker even used the Warrior Ethos

lines during a speech last year inducting retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Crandall into the Pentagon Hall of Heroes. Crandall received the Medal of Honor from President Bush last year for his heroic actions in Vietnam. During the Pentagon Hall of Heroes induction ceremony, General Schoomaker stated, the words of the warrior ethos were made real that day in the Ia Drang Valley.<sup>78</sup> It was very clear that General Schoomaker placed a lot of attention and emphasis on instilling warrior ethos into his organization. As a result of his commitment, other leaders across the Army followed suit.

*How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises* is examined by highlighting some of the critical incidents that occurred during General Schoomaker's tenure as Chief of Staff of the Army. His response to prisoner abuse in Iraq and issues surrounding outpatient care at Walter Reed reminded the Army and the Nation that these incidents did not reflect the vast majority of the force who embody Army values as well as warrior ethos principles.<sup>79</sup> When testifying before congress on prisoner abuse in Iraq, he acknowledged responsibility and took the incident personally.<sup>80</sup> However, he went on to remind congress of the many brave men and women who serve the Nation with honor and courage. General Schoomaker also spoke of a platoon leader recovering after losing a leg during combat operations in Iraq.<sup>81</sup> After being fitted with a prosthetic leg, the platoon leader was due to reunite with his platoon in combat. The platoon leader's desire to return to his unit exemplifies the warrior spirit. General Schoomaker's reaction to this critical incident overlaps with Schein's reinforcing mechanism of stories about important events and people.

As for General Schoomaker's testimony before congress concerning outpatient care at Walter Reed, he commended "the medical staff who have devoted themselves to fulfilling the promise of our Army's Warrior Ethos that we will never leave a fallen comrade."<sup>82</sup> Although the medical staff performs their duties well, General Schoomaker admits that problems with infrastructure, management, and resources exist.<sup>83</sup> He also stated that the Army is committed to fixing these problems. Overall, General Schoomaker reacted to critical incidents by confronting each crisis head on, not blaming the entire force for the negative actions of a few, and reinforcing the importance of the Army values and warrior ethos principles. How leaders react to crises influences our behavior and impact Army culture.

The next mechanism is *how leaders allocate resources*. In integrating a new warrior ethos spirit in the United States Army, General Schoomaker and leaders allocated resources by embedding and developing a new graphic training aid Army values card that displayed the four lines of the warrior ethos. The card is available through the Army's Training Support Center.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, the card is issued to new soldiers during basic training. Army leaders also allocated warrior ethos training time at the basic combat training course, and introduced new soldiers to the warrior ethos principles.<sup>85</sup> Five formal training hours were added to the course to focus on warrior ethos.<sup>86</sup> Additionally, leaders emphasize the warrior ethos principles throughout the basic combat training course for enlisted soldiers.<sup>87</sup> The Army did not implement or allocate any type of standard warrior ethos training time after soldiers left the training base. However, leaders have the task of developing and maintaining the warrior ethos spirit in their units, especially as units prepare for war.<sup>88</sup> "Commanders have the

ultimate responsibility to train soldiers and develop leaders who can adjust to change with confidence and exploit new situations, technology, and developments to their advantage.”<sup>89</sup> For example, an article in the January-March 2006 Engineer Journal titled *Developing and Maintaining the Warrior Ethos in Engineer Units* depicts continuous training and discipline as key factors in the development and sustainment of the warrior ethos spirit before, during and after deployments.<sup>90</sup>

General Schoomaker also used the embedding mechanism of *deliberate teaching and coaching*. For example, the Army upgraded basic training for officers and enlisted personnel to emphasize combat leadership skills and warrior ethos.<sup>91</sup> The Basic Combat Training Center of Excellence at Fort Jackson developed a Warrior Ethos Training Support Package. Leaders and instructors teach soldiers about the tenets of warrior ethos, which develops a sense of bonding, trust, and unity. The Way Ahead Plan, which outlines the Army’s campaign plan, encourages leaders to use the concept of warrior ethos to coach, mentor and train soldiers.<sup>92</sup> General Schoomaker also taught future brigade and battalion commanders about the principles of warrior ethos during the pre-command course for officers at Fort Leavenworth.<sup>93</sup>

*How leaders allocate rewards and status* embedding mechanism is demonstrated at Initial Entry Training. The training support package used at Initial Entry Training outlines an evaluation process that all new soldiers have to go through. During the evaluation process, drill sergeants are responsible for observing how new soldiers demonstrate the desired attributes of the Warrior Ethos principles regardless of the stresses encountered in the performance of a soldier’s duties. “At the end of each Basic Combat Training phase, these observations are recorded and evaluated during

counseling sessions with soldiers.”<sup>94</sup> Soldiers are also expected to define and describe principles of the warrior ethos at the end of each Basic Combat Training phase. The leadership at Fort Sill’s initial entry training presents the honor graduate with an award for exhibiting superior skills which reflect the principles of always placing the mission first, never accepting defeat, never quitting and never leaving a fallen comrade. Additionally, soldiers across the Army receive awards and recognition for demonstrating the army values and living the warrior ethos. For example, Major General J.D. Thurman presented Sergeant Joshua Szott the Silver Star for exemplifying the warrior ethos during combat. “In heavy fighting during an enemy ambush, Szott assisted in carrying four wounded comrades to a safe area even though he was shot in the left leg and took shrapnel in his right leg during the fight. He also forced the retreat of more than 20 enemy guerillas from their dug-in positions, which ultimately led to the defeat and capture of those responsible for the attack.”<sup>95</sup> There are many other examples of soldiers receiving commendation for demonstrating the warrior ethos principles.

As for the embedding mechanism of *the criteria by which leaders recruit, select, and promote*, the Army started adding the warrior ethos way of thinking to promotion board guidance.<sup>96</sup> In 2004, BG Rhett Hernandez, Director, OMPHRC, published a letter stating that the Army is looking at retaining professionals with a warrior ethos mindset.<sup>97</sup> As a part of the Army’s promotion system, the U. S. Army began to look for officers and senior noncommissioned officers who understood and emulated the warrior ethos principles. In addition, during local promotion boards and Soldier of the Year competitions, some Soldiers had to recite the Warrior Ethos and the Soldier’s Creed. As an example, one Soldier had to deliver a three to five minute speech on what it

means to be a Soldier and the Warrior Ethos.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, the Army Study Guide requires soldiers to know the importance of the warrior ethos prior to appearing before a local promotion board.<sup>99</sup> Embedding mechanisms helped shape the military culture and reinforcing mechanisms acted as a secondary, supporting tool.

An example of the reinforcing mechanism of *organizational design and structure* is illustrated by the Army redesigning the curriculum for the Primary Leadership Development Course and renaming it the Warrior Leader Course on October 15, 2005. The Warrior Leader Course trains soldiers who are preparing to become non-commissioned officers. In 2005, the Army's director of training determined that the course needed to be redesigned to better prepare junior noncommissioned officers for combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>100</sup> "[The] Warrior Leader Course is the right name for the new course because it espouses the tenets of the warrior ethos."<sup>101</sup> This change to the curriculum was meant to teach warfighting skills to junior leaders.

General Schoomaker developed *organizational systems and procedures* by reinforcing his beliefs and assumptions that every Soldier is a warrior first by incorporating the warrior ethos principles into Army doctrinal manuals and training publications.<sup>102</sup> As a result, it became routine to see updated manuals and publications with increased emphasis on warrior ethos. This reinforcing mechanism is intertwined with his embedding mechanism of what leaders pay attention to. The reinforcing mechanism of rites and rituals is best illustrated by using an example from the Army basic combat training course. At basic training, a rite of passage ceremony culminates after a soldier understands and demonstrates the principles of warrior ethos as well as



several other goals. The rite of passage ceremony occurs at the end of basic training and signifies a basic training soldier becoming a full-pledged member of the Army.<sup>103</sup>

As for the reinforcing mechanisms of *design of physical space, facades, and buildings*, General Schoomaker added a Warrior Ethos Exhibit at the Pentagon in November 2004. During the unveiling of the Warrior Ethos Exhibit, General Schoomaker once again reinforced the importance of warrior ethos. One observer stated “I believe the people who did this [exhibit] did a really good job capturing the Warrior Ethos spirit using officers, enlisted, past and present people in the military.”<sup>104</sup> The images and quotes were selected from more than 30,000 notes submitted online by Americans to the Army’s website.<sup>105</sup> This physical structure helps to reinforce the importance and significance of the warrior ethos and the sacrifices Soldiers have made and continue to make in protecting and defending the Constitution of the United States.

*Stories about important events and people* can be illustrated by talking about vignettes of heroes in the Army. A study by the Army Research Institute titled Warrior Ethos: Analysis of the Concept and Initial Development of Applications states, “the importance of sustaining warrior ethos is indicated in vignettes which describe actions that resulted in award of the Congressional Medal of Honor.”<sup>106</sup> Field Manual 1 uses a vignette to show how two senior noncommissioned officers demonstrated the warrior ethos in an attempt to rescue a fallen comrade.<sup>107</sup> “Their actions saved the life of an Army pilot.”<sup>108</sup> These stories provide concrete examples of the warrior ethos principles. They give soldiers and leaders tangible evidence to help better understand the term “Warrior Ethos.” Furthermore, some leaders used the story of the 507<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Company’s ambush by Iraqi forces to reinforce this mechanism and the need to re-

emphasize the warrior ethos mindset. “An Army investigation later determined that many of the 507<sup>th</sup> Soldiers were unable to defend themselves because their weapons malfunctioned.”<sup>109</sup> It is apparent that some of the soldiers were more focused on their military occupational specialty as opposed to being a warrior. All of these stories and important events provide examples of how this reinforcing mechanism shapes the environment as well as the culture.

The United States Army used the *formal statements of organizational philosophy* mechanism when the four lines of the warrior ethos were added to the Soldier’s Creed. The Soldier’s Creed is in figure 1 below. These words have been used on posters, presentations, and in videos. These words in the Soldier’s Creed reinforce Schoomaker’s beliefs and assumptions as well as his expectations of all soldiers.

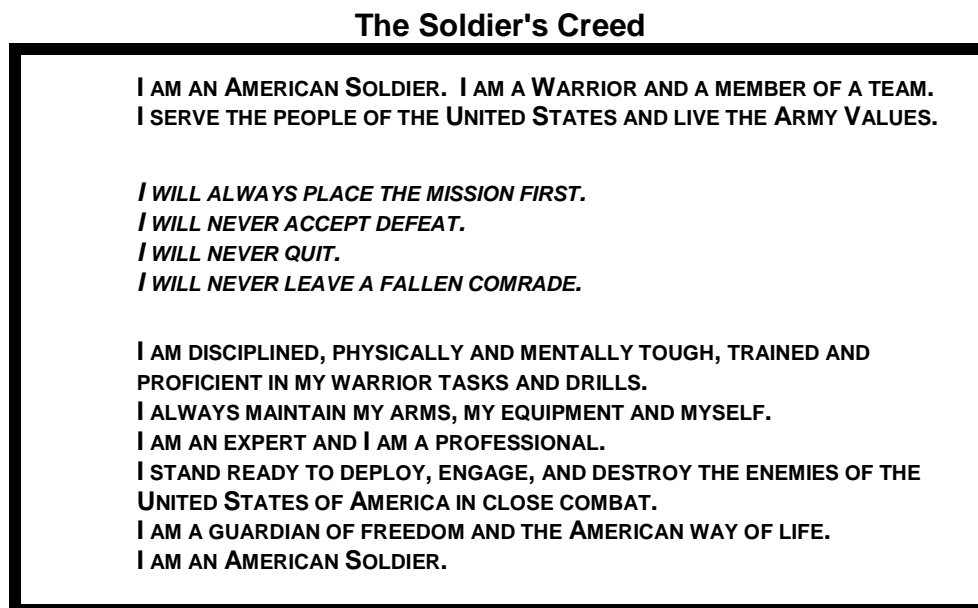


Figure 1. Warrior Ethos embedded in the Soldier’s Creed

These are just a few examples of the reinforcing mechanisms used to instill the warrior ethos mindset into the force. Reinforcing mechanisms also included the United States Army Recruiting Command making commercials and videos about soldiers displaying

the warrior ethos mindset. Many units also added warrior ethos to their homepages on the internet.

### Reinforcing and Embedding Mechanism Summarization

Thus far, this paper has focused on Schein's model using specific examples for each of the embedding and reinforcing mechanisms. However, it should be noted that the embedding and reinforcing mechanisms support each other. When embedding and reinforcing mechanisms are closely connected, transformation of organizational culture is more likely to succeed.<sup>110</sup> The United States Army used a training strategy, speeches by leaders, soldier stories, doctrine updates, warrior emphasis at promotion boards, graphic training aids, a Warrior Ethos Exhibit, and the development of a Soldier's Creed to help infuse and change the warrior ethos mindset across the organization. Table 1 shows how some of these embedding and reinforcing mechanisms are connected; thereby helping to revive the warrior ethos spirit in the United States Army.

### Recommendations

Models such as Schein's organizational culture model are sometimes criticized as too academic. However, when utilizing these models to better understand the successes of an implementation strategy, we find they have great value. As leaders and soldiers, we should use them more often. It was the comprehensiveness of the implementation that has helped the "Warrior Ethos" succeed. Therefore when used comprehensively, Schein's concepts of embedding and reinforcing mechanisms can work for any organization. It is a proven model that will generate change and success thus reshaping an organization's culture. Organizations must reinforce embedding mechanisms with secondary mechanisms called reinforcing mechanisms. If reinforcing

mechanisms are not aligned with embedding mechanisms, cultural change is much more difficult to achieve.<sup>111</sup>

Initiatives	Embedding Mechanism	Reinforcing Mechanism
Speeches by Leaders emphasizing Warrior Ethos	-What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis -Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching	-Stories about important events and people
Graphic Training Aid – Issue to Soldiers Highlighting Warrior Ethos	-How leaders allocate resources	
Training Strategy at Basic Combat Training and other training institutions	-How leaders allocate resources  -Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching	
Promotion System Warrior Ethos emphasis	-Criteria by which leaders recruit, select, and promote	
Doctrine – Updating Field Manuals and other regulations	-What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis	-Organizational systems and procedures
New Warrior Ethos Exhibit	-How leaders allocate resources	-Design of physical space, facades, and buildings
Soldier Stories – demonstrating warrior ethos	-Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching	-Stories about important events and people
Including Warrior Ethos in the Soldier's Creed		-Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters

Table 1. Initiatives Relating to Schein's Embedding and Reinforcing Mechanisms

## Conclusion

Instilling the warrior ethos mindset in the United States Army is one of General Schoomaker's greatest accomplishments.<sup>112</sup> General Schoomaker used embedding and reinforcing mechanisms to ensure the warrior ethos became a way of life for all soldiers. Today, the warrior ethos' concept has stayed with the force and will be here for some time to come. During General Schoomaker's retirement ceremony, the

Secretary of the Army stated, "The ethos is and will continue to be the soul of the American Soldier, a proud legacy for this great warrior, Pete Schoomaker."<sup>113</sup>

From my research, I determined that the warrior ethos is observable, but not necessarily measureable statistically. The exact percentage of Soldiers who live by all the tenets of the warrior ethos is not known. However, the actions of many soldiers can be observed which embody the principles of the warrior ethos. The 2003 strategic plan to infuse and heighten the awareness of warrior ethos throughout the Army's culture has changed the mindset and behavior of many soldiers and leaders. During a time of war, it was extremely important that every soldier demonstrate the warrior ethos principles. The lack of demonstrating these principles can affect performance. Subsequently, the lack of demonstrating these principles can also affect the mission, the soldier and eventually the organization. Warrior ethos explains what is expected of every soldier. In order to keep this warrior ethos spirit at its peak, Schein's model of embedding and reinforcing mechanisms must continue to be an essential element. If not, the warrior ethos mind set and behavior could decline again, similar to what we saw in the early 2000s. Warrior ethos is and will always be a critical part of the Army's culture.

### Endnotes

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